
WORKING PAPER**Follow up of the Resolution 17/05 on Shark Finning and on the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC regarding shark finning and need to assess the opportunity to prohibit the removal of shark fins on-board for all shark fisheries in IOTC****SUBMITTED BY: EUROPEAN UNION**

Resolution 17/05 on the conservation of sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC establishes a regime that prohibits vessels landing fresh sharks to remove shark fins on-board. More precisely, vessels landing fresh sharks shall prohibit the landing, retention on-board, transshipment and carrying of shark fins, which are not naturally attached to the shark carcass until the first point of landing.

Vessels landing frozen sharks are still exempted from the above-mentioned prohibition and are therefore still allowed to apply the traditional rule of not having on board fins that total more than 5% of the weight of sharks on-board, up to the first point of landing. However, all CPCs, including those landing frozen sharks, are encouraged to progressively implement the above-mentioned prohibition.

The regime applied to vessels landing frozen sharks will be revisited by the Commission in its 2019 Annual Meeting in light of recommendations from the Scientific Committee, using the best available science and case studies from other CPCs already prohibiting the removal of shark fins on-board.

However, the EU would like to underline existing limitations in observer coverage, shortcomings in the provision of complete, accurate and timely catch records for sharks caught in association with fisheries managed by IOTC, as well as the need to improve the collection of species-specific data on catch, discards and trade of sharks as a basis for the sound management of these species.

In view of the above, in line with relevant international commitments,¹ and taking into account the outcomes of similar analysis and discussions in other RFMOs, the EU would like to request both the Scientific Committee and the Compliance Committee, as appropriate:

- to analyse and document, wherever possible, whether the practice of shark finning still takes place in IOTC and to what extent, despite the adoption of Resolution 17/05, and to review the compliance with the shark finning prohibition adopted by IOTC;
- to analyse, also taking into account other research performed, whether the use of the 5% fin-to-carcass weight ratios is an effective, verifiable and enforceable means of ensuring the eradication of shark finning in the IOTC context or whether it would be appropriate to have additional measures;
- to assess the availability of the data required for performing the analyses listed above, highlight outstanding gaps and propose options for ensuring the collection of missing data, including a mechanism to generate the data necessary for the scientific review of the 5% fin to carcass ratio;
- to identify possible means to improve the submission of complete, accurate and timely catch records for sharks, as well as the collection of species-specific data on catch, biology, discards and trade.

The Scientific Committee and the Compliance Committee shall provide the results of these analyses and make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Commission for its consideration and follow-up at its 2019 Annual Meeting.

¹ The United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries, adopted annually by consensus, since 2007 (62/177, 63/112, 64/72, 65/38, 66/68, 67/79, 68/71, 69/109, 70/75, 71/123 and A/RES/72/72) calls upon States to take immediate and concerted action to improve the implementation of and compliance with existing regional fisheries management organisation or arrangement measures that regulate shark fisheries and incidental catch of sharks, in particular those measures which prohibit or restrict fisheries conducted solely for the purpose of harvesting shark fins, and, where necessary, to consider taking other measures, as appropriate, such as requiring that all sharks be landed with fins naturally attached. The FAO International Plan of Action for Sharks calls on States to encourage full use of dead sharks, to facilitate improved species-specific catch and landings data and monitoring of shark catches and the identification and reporting of species-specific biological and trade data.